



Gamelan is the name of the traditional music ensemble found in Indonesia, primarily on the islands of Java and

Bali. The ensemble is comprised of metallophones, hanging gongs, double-headed drums, and other melodic instruments, including bamboo flutes, a bowed instrument, and voice. The full ensemble requires 20–30 musicians. *Gamelan* music can be performed independently as instrumental music but also can be performed to accompany dance or *wayang kulit*, shadow puppet theatre. Traditionally, the music of the *gamelan* is not notated, so musicians learn by ear through repetition. The ensemble is led by the rhythmic cues of the drummer, and does not have a conductor in the way a Western orchestra does.

Although there are commonalities between *gamelan* music in Java and Bali, contrasting styles of playing have developed on each island independently. The University of Hawai'i is fortunate to have two full sets of *gamelan* instruments—*Gamelan Kyai Gandrung* from Java and *Gamelan Segara Madu* from Bali. Both ensembles are currently active and the membership in each is a diverse mixture of university students, faculty, and members from the greater Oahu community who believe in promoting cross-cultural understanding through the arts. Together, the two ensembles perform bi-annually at the Music Department of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in end-of-semester productions. The ensembles have also performed at other Honolulu locations. Through the support of the Hawai'i Gamelan Society, the two *gamelan* groups also make appearances throughout the community in educational outreach programs.



Hawai'i Gamelan Society

Celebration of Tradition through Innovation

Forty Years of *Gamelan* in Hawai'i



UHM Javanese Gamelan bonang, Eric Chang, photographer.

Inset: UHM Javanese Music and Dance Performance, 1970s, Mamoru Najita, photographer.

Right: UHM Javanese Gamelan Kyai Gandrung gongs, Eric Chang, photographer.



UHM Javanese Gamelan performs at Pacific and Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) conference, 2011, Keila Y. Santaella, photographer.

The University of Hawai'i Javanese Gamelan Ensemble: Gamelan Kyai Gandrung, the Venerable One in Love

The University of Hawai'i Javanese Gamelan Ensemble is celebrated as the longest continuously-active *gamelan* ensemble in the United States. The program initially began in 1970 with the arrival in Hawai'i of the Javanese *gamelan* instruments—a gift to the University of Hawai'i from an anonymous donor—and has been active since that time. Through the years, the ensemble has collaborated with numerous Indonesian artists on a variety of projects, including dance-drama and *wayang kulit*, or shadow puppet theatre. The ensemble is currently led by director Byron Moon, who has studied *gamelan* in Hawai'i since the 1970s, and director emeritus Hardja Susilo, the founding director of the ensemble and retired professor of Ethnomusicology with a specialty in the performing arts of Indonesia. Both a musician and dancer, Pak Susilo



Hardja Susilo,
director emeritus,
UHM Javanese
Gamelan

has been teaching *gamelan* in Hawai'i for the past 41 years. He was the first *gamelan* teacher in the United States, and has taught numerous students for over four decades, providing them with an introduction to Indonesian culture through the arts. Many of the Americans who teach at universities

throughout the country and around the world first studied with, or were introduced to *gamelan* by him.



UHM Balinese Gamelan performs at East-West Center, 2010, Jolie Wanger, photographer.

The University of Hawai'i Balinese Gamelan Ensemble: Gamelan Segara Madu, the Sea of Honey

In 1995, the former Governor of Bali, Ida Bagus Oka, presented a complete set of *Balinese gamelan gong kebyar* instruments to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in recognition of the commitment of the University and the Javanese Gamelan Ensemble to advocating for Indonesia culture, especially through the performing arts. In the years since, the ensemble has been led by many distinguished artists from Bali. Currently, the ensemble is led by resident artist I Made Widana from Bali. Widana, a professional musician, composer, and dancer has been enthusiastically leading the ensemble since 2009.



UHM Balinese Gamelan performs at UHM Music Department, 1995, Mamoru Najita, photographer.

Tradition through Innovation: Celebrating Forty Years of Gamelan in Hawai'i

The Hawai'i Gamelan Society (HGS) and the University of Hawai'i Gamelan Ensembles would like to thank the Honolulu Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts (MOCA) for their generous grant that enabled this project. Using the resources provided by MOCA, the Hawai'i Gamelan Society supported the development of four new, innovative works for Javanese and Balinese *gamelan*.

Through the auspices of the 2010-2011 MOCA grant, our ensembles also conducted three outreach programs to local schools. Members of the organization performed a lecture-demonstration on Javanese and Balinese *gamelan* and dance at Helemano Elementary School in Wahiawa to 180 fifth- and sixth-graders and at Farrington High School in Honolulu to 30 students in grades 9-12. HGS members presented a lecture-demonstration on Javanese and Balinese *gamelan* at the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council Conference to 200 Oahu high school students from 19 public and private schools. As part of the conference, the UH Javanese Gamelan Ensemble performed for the students, including traditional works and new MOCA repertoire.

The following four compositions were created and performed as part of the MOCA project:

Mystik

This work, composed for Javanese *gamelan* and expanded to include some Balinese *gamelan* instruments (*kendang*, *kajar*, and *ceng-ceng*), evokes the imagery of something meaningful in life that has passed or again reappears momentarily in one's own memory, like a dream.

— Composed by I Made Widana with the support of Hardja Susilo

Dwi Warna

The title, "*Dwi Warna*" means "two colors" in the Balinese language. The concept of two colors here has many meanings. First, it represents the flowing river and the ocean waves. *Dwi Warna* also represents the two tuning systems used: the *gamelan gong kebyar* in *pelog* (seven tone) tuning and the *gamelan gender wayang* in *slendro* (five tone) tuning.

— Composed by I Made Widana

The Five-Flower Story

In traditional Balinese musical design, the instruments heard in this piece will play the main melody of the composition together. However, these instruments—and their musicians—are also given a chance to explore new kinds of musical relationships. Here, the metal instruments provide a low, resonant accompaniment in contrast to the high-pitched and energetic *suling* (bamboo flute). As for the story the piece tells, the composer invites the audience to imagine their own story—and their own five flowers—while following the events of the music.

— Composed by John Chow Seymour, PhD student in Music Composition at UHM and member of the UHM Balinese Gamelan Ensemble

Campuh

Campuh is a Javanese word meaning "to engage in battle." Using both traditional devices and new ideas, "*Campuh*" is a programmatic composition depicting the skirmishes between Pancawati's monkey army and a horde of Alengka giants. The piece utilizes Javanese *gamelan*, to represent the monkey army, and a Balinese *bageanjur* ensemble, to depict the menacing giants. The former prevails in the clash and continues on its march to the Alengka Kingdom of the giants.

— This composition is a collaborative effort of Hardja Susilo and I Made Widana



UHM Javanese Gamelan performs *Mystik* at PAAC conference, 2011. Keila Y. Santaella, photographer.



UHM Balinese Gamelan performs at Ala Moana Centerstage, 2011. Jolie Wanger, photographer.



HGS Outreach Program at Helemano Elementary School, Wahiawa, 2011. Janice Okimoto, photographer.



I Made Widana, Balinese Gamelan director, dances *Baris* at East-West Center, 2010. Michiko Ueno-Herr, photographer.

Through the development of these new works for Javanese and Balinese *gamelan*, the Hawai'i Gamelan Society celebrates a tradition of forty years of *gamelan* in Hawai'i through innovation. Only through a practical and in-depth understanding of tradition can we achieve innovation. The Hawai'i Gamelan Society would also like to dedicate these new works for *gamelan* to Dr. Ricardo Trimillos in the year of his retirement from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Retired Professor of Asian Studies and Ethnomusicologist, Dr. Trimillos played a key role in bringing the Javanese *gamelan* instruments to Hawai'i in 1970. Always an avid supporter of *gamelan* activity here at UH-Mānoa, we are indebted to his contributions. He continues to expand the borders of student knowledge and experience, both here at UHM and as a guest scholar at many universities internationally, through his continued support of ethnic music and dance traditions.



UHM Javanese Music and Dance Performance, 1970s, Mamoru Najita, photographer.

Highlight Performances and Projects

Study Tour to Java

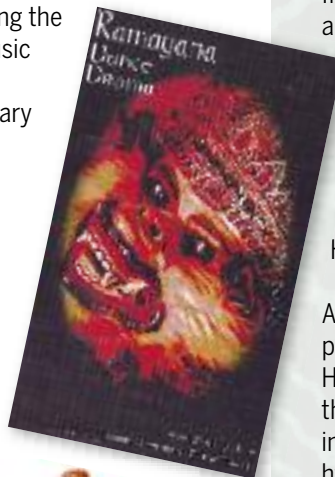
In the early 1970s, more than twenty of the first members of the UHM Javanese Gamelan Ensemble participated in a study tour to Jogjakarta, Java. They were the first group of Americans to participate in a program of this type. The students were able to experience Javanese culture and performing arts through this intensive immersion, witnessing authentic court performances. While in Java, the students sharpened their skills in traditional Javanese music and dance.

Gamelan Music of Java

In 1983, director Hardja Susilo and the UHM Javanese Gamelan Ensemble created an educational video, produced by the East-West Center, covering the basic concepts of Javanese *gamelan*. This video is still used in world music and ethnomusicology courses in American universities, and offers an introduction to playing Javanese *gamelan* music while providing necessary background information as well.

Balinese and Javanese *Ramayana*

In April 1998, the University of Hawai'i Gamelan Ensembles created a *Ramayana* performance that debuted at Leeward Community College. The first half of the performance depicted the abduction of Sita in classical Javanese style, while the second half employed Balinese style to describe Ravana's defeat. The performance was directed by Javanese Gamelan director, Hardja Susilo, and guest Balinese artist, I Dewa Putu Berata.



UHM Balinese Gamelan gangsa, Eric Chang, photographer.

Music at Mānoa

www.hawaii.edu/uhammusic
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
College of Arts & Humanities
Music Department
The Javanese and Balinese *gamelan* instruments are property of the University of Hawai'i and are housed at the UHM Music Department.



The 2011 new works for *gamelan* were made possible with the support of the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts.



The Hawai'i Gamelan Society is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to the appreciation of Indonesian culture through the study and performance of *gamelan* music.

If you are interested in more information about our organization and the University of Hawai'i Gamelan Ensembles, please visit our website at www.gamelan.hawaii.edu. If you are interested in upcoming performances or organizing outreach programs, please contact us at HawaiiGamelanSociety@gmail.com.

A collection of documents and performance recordings from the Hawai'i Gamelan Society is accessible through eVols, one of the UHM's institutional repositories, at: <http://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10524/6299>



Image from The Green Sheet, UHM Faculty Newspaper, Dec. 1970, Vol. 3 No. 4.